

Community Services and Recreation

DRAFT MINUTES/APPROVED

To: Community Services Commission Members

From: Gerardo Sorkin, Director

Re: Commission Meeting December 2, 2008

Due to lack of quorum and absence of Chairmen, meeting was not officially called to order, but began at 5:30 p.m.

I. Attendance:

Present: Michael Compare, Walter Heinig, Judith McKay.

Staff: Gerardo Sorkin, Director and Carla Pelliccio (Secretary).

Absent: Antoinette McKeon, Laurie-Jean Hannon, Thomas Balga, William Carey, Frank Kruglik and Scott Leamon.

II. Acceptance of Minutes:

Due to lack of quorum, no motion could be made to accept the Minutes of October 14, 2008 or November 4, 2008. Approval of these minutes will added to next meeting's agenda.

III. Correspondence:

No correspondence to report.

IV. Director's Report:

Daycare:

Enrollment: Daycare has maintained their enrollment numbers. Still operating at capacity. Daycare waiting list is currently around 10 children; the after school program has a bit more on the waiting list.

Ceiling and walls of the Daycare will be painted this weekend.

Counseling:

Personnel: A Counselor IV has been hired; will be starting Monday 12/8.

Mr. Sorkin is currently interviewing finalists for Counselor III and hopes to make an offer by next week.

Senior Center:

Activities: Copies of the November *Senior Happenings* brochure of activities and events were distributed to each Commission member.

Mr. Sorkin attended the first of many open forum discussions with the Seniors today. He plans on hosting this open discussion with the seniors, on the first Tuesday, between 12:45pm - 1:15pm, monthly. This forum will allow the seniors to offer comments, suggestions and ask any questions they may have.

Senior Center Renovation and expansion Plans: During the transition period, the American Legion for the main operations. The Library will house programs that may require use of computers; some activities will be transferred to take place at Recreation. This transition period is expected to take 6-7 months (from March – September 2009).

Mr. Heinig asked if architectural plans were provided to the Committee to view. Mr. Sorkin mentioned that the plans had been posted, a public forum took place at the library. Mr. Sorkin will provide drawings of these architectural plans to the Commissioners for the next meeting.

Youth Services:

The Substance Abuse Prevention Council (SAPC) met on 11/19/08 at North Haven High School. A variety of attendees included the superintendent, the police and fire chief, Antoinette McKeon, Gerardo Sorkin, Nancy Leddy, as well as several student and parent representatives. The Council discussed a variety of current issues and ways in which members can collaborate, Nancy Leddy presented on prevention activities that she is already doing at the middle and high schools. Mr. Sorkin had suggested to contact the Regional Council to see if they can provide support. The next meeting will take place in January 2009.

During the November 4th meeting, the question was posed by Mr. Heinig as to how the effectiveness of these prevention programs are assessed. He also wonders if this Council will be able to answer the question of how big the problem is, as well as how and why these problems begin. Mr. Sorkin reiterated his hope that this Council will be able to take on the task of conducting assessments and collecting data to determine the magnitude of the problems affecting youth in North Haven. Mr. Sorkin hopes they can have some type of consensus as to how this can be addressed.

Ms. MacKay had asked if there are plans for the Council to present to the parents. Mr. Sorkin stated that this was an option that was brought to the table, in addition to the suggested idea of providing training to the school nurses to identify the symptoms of substance use.

Community Services:

Thanksgiving Meal Distribution: took place on Monday 11/24 from 2-4pm in the Community Services office, as well as Tuesday 11/25; 54 turkeys and food were distributed (165 family members) this holiday season. Donations have been collected from schools, local organizations and individual residents.

Holiday Meal / Toy Distribution: will take place on 12/18/08 from 2-4pm; anytime on 12/19/08 in the Community Services office; In addition, several families will be “adopted” this holiday season. Private individuals have contacted the department requesting the ability to “adopt” a family. Certain families who have been identified as “in need” have been matched with these families anonymously. The family is then asked to provide ages and sizes of family members as well as the items that each member would like this holiday. Approximately 10 families will be matched to be adopted.

Monthly Food Bank Statistics: The statistics indicate the number of units or number of meals that are distributed each month. 261 meals were distributed for the month of September. Mr. Sorkin encouraged the Commissioners to help spread the word to others to donate as well as take advantage of the service if needed.

Energy Assistance Program: Applications are moving along well this energy season, with approximately 20 applications being processed every Wednesday. Appointments are being handled by three staff

members. It has been reported that the Community Action Agency has been maintaining their 10-day response time to determine eligibility. Mr. Sorkin had commented on how well the staff have been going above and beyond in maintaining communication with the residents as they facilitate completion of their files. The concern that the staff show for the residents is amazing.

V. Finance Report:

The October 2008 budget reports were reviewed by the Commission.

Community Services October 2008: bottom line = 29.6% which is under budget. Due to Counselor IV vacancy, the Full-Time line has not been utilized. Regarding the Dues and Expenses Line: this line is about to be exhausted (96.9% utilized year to date). This line has been utilized for license renewals and professional trainings, which Mr. Sorkin is a strong supporter. He anticipates that this line will be utilized more in the future and plans on budgeting more accurately in the next budget year to accommodate these professional development needs. The Consultants Line (0% utilized year to date) is anticipated to be utilized soon with the training that will be required of the new Clinical computer systems before the end of the fiscal year.

Welfare: Current snapshot of Welfare expenditures were also distributed and reviewed.

October 2008: bottom line relatively on target= 36.3%

Senior Center: Current snapshot of Senior Center expenditures were also distributed and reviewed.

October 2008: bottom line relatively on target= 29.6%

Daycare: By the next meeting, Mr. Sorkin hopes to bring the annual report for the next meeting.

VI. Old Business:

There is no old business to report.

VII. New Business:

Mr Sorkin wanted to acknowledge three commissioners whose terms will end on 12/31/08: Frank Kruglik, Scott Leamon, Antoinette McKeon. By the next meeting three new members will be appointed by the First Selectman. During the January meeting, the anticipation is that Selectman McCarty will attend the meeting to swear in the new members.

VIII. Public Participation:

Finance Director Thomas Morrison attended meeting in order to introduce himself to the Commission as well as set the expectation that he plans on being an active participant at these meetings.

Mr. Heinig used the opportunity to ask Mr. Morrison the question as to what the role of the Commissioners are as they relate to the oversight of finances. Mr. Morrison reiterated the significance of the financial reports that are distributed to the Commissioners each month. He feels that by simply monitoring these figures allows them to question money coming in or going out, which he welcomes.

Mr. Sorkin reiterated that his goal is to maintain transparency with the Commissioners; it is his duty to provide the Commissioners with valid information, keeping them aware of what is going on, and allow the Commissioners to ask any questions that they may have. Mr. Sorkin hopes that the new commissioners will bring more participation, and hopes to have quorum for all meetings moving forward into the new year.

IX. Adjournment:

The meeting ended at 6:15 p.m.